

John Jacobus Speer House
Bloomfield Avenue
Clifton, Passaic County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-149

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16-CLIF

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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John Jacobus Speer House
Bloomfield Avenue
Clifton, Passaic County, New Jersey

Owner: N.P. Nelson Iron Works, Incorporated

Date of Erection: 1754 south part; 1784 north section

Architect:

Builder: Elias Vreeland - earlier part
John Jacobus Speer - the later section

Present Condition: Fair

Number of Stories: One and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - brownstone
except north elevation and
about one-half of the west
elevation which is frame

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimney

Roof - pitch, wood shingles

Historical Data:

This house stands on a tract of the Acquackanonk grant of 1679. Johannes Vreeland acquired the property in 1698. His son, Elias Vreeland, was the

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builder of the south part of this house. It was built in the fall of 1754 and completed the following spring. Originally, the house consisted of one room, the kitchen with a large fireplace and the usual Dutch oven. The space over the kitchen served for sleeping quarters. The property passed from the Vreeland family to John Cummings who sold it to John Jacobus Speer. It was Speer who built the north section of the house, so that his married son, Gerrit, might reside with him. The property remained in the Speer family until 1916 when it was sold to the Peru Realty Company, Clifton, and has since been in the possession of Brighton Mills and now of the Nelson Iron Works.

The date 1754 can be accepted as approximately correct for the erection of the first part of the Speer Homestead. The public records of 1755 speak of laying out a road which passed by the new dwelling house of Elias Vreeland.

During the Revolution the house was occupied by John Jacobus Speer. There is a record of a raid made by the British late in the fall of 1776 when fourteen sheep, eighteen geese, three hundred chestnut posts, one gun, one pistol, and a silver neck clasp were carried off as plunder.

Bibliography:

Articles in Passaic News Herald of October 20, 1924 and August 2, 1926. A later issue of the News, date unascertained, contains the history of the house written by W. W. Scott

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